

Office of the SWIC Newsletter



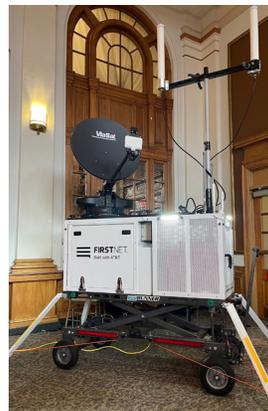
Message from John T. Stevens, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) & Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for FirstNet in NH



The New Hampshire Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) stands at the forefront of this nation as a leader and model for the rest of the country to emulate. The accomplishments of this committee can only be explained by the commitment of this volunteer group who without hesitation addresses interoperable challenges that are recognized by national leadership throughout the country. Since its inception the SIEC has made it, its mission to advocate for Public Safety no matter the consequences and has displayed great courage and commitment in taking a position that was sometimes difficult, but appropriate at the time.

As the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) I could not be more proud of the work that has been accomplished by this committee and for the efforts made by the leadership to create this model of excellence. Significant to this model was the recent acceptance of the FirstNet Board to meet in New Hampshire at the University of New Hampshire. Significant in that New Hampshire was in fact the first and only state that indicated it was opting-out of FirstNet. A contentious decision, but one that was right for New Hampshire if the SIEC was truly going to advocate for Public Safety. Supported by Governor Sununu because the SIEC did its homework and stood to build a state-of-the-art communications network for first responders. When it was determined that no other state was going to follow our lead, it is completely understandable that New Hampshire would make a final decision to opt-in. It was at that point however, that the partners to that effort, FirstNet, AT&T, and New Hampshire were emotionally and tactfully contentious and it now required a rebuilding of confidence in the relationships through trust and a sense of community to appropriately represent the Public Safety in New Hampshire. New Hampshire and the SIEC successfully made that their mission which serves as a model for the rest of the country and brought the FirstNet Board to New Hampshire to personally experience the existence of a true partnership between New Hampshire, FirstNet, and AT&T that will serve Public Safety for years to come.

The FirstNet Summit not only provided an opportunity for Public Safety Officials throughout New England to meet with the FirstNet Board and the FirstNet Authority, but with the support of AT&T, provided a training opportunity for those in attendance to listen to Dr. Anna Courie and her team through Bouldercrest and Lighthouse to present, “Mental Health Awareness and Resiliency for First Responders.” A program that was very well received and certainly of benefit to those in attendance.



It is also important to acknowledge the support from vendors who were there, initiated network conversations, and were able to associate their company efforts in supporting FirstNet connectivity. There were many who participated in the planning of this Summit, but it is absolutely appropriate to acknowledge the efforts of these three gentlemen, who without their commitment in making this happen, the FirstNet Summit is safe to say would not have taken place: Bruce Fitzgerald, FirstNet Liaison to New Hampshire, Owen Smith, AT&T President-Northern New England, and Jamie Burkhart, AT&T Associate and University of New Hampshire Trustee. It is with that being said that we all offer our sincere thanks and appreciation for making the New Hampshire FirstNet Summit a resounding success.

Operationally, AT&T continues to support FirstNet efforts in bringing assets to less defined areas of the state where connectivity is difficult, but necessary. Case in point was the Bemis Fire in Crawford Notch where the AT&T/FirstNet Sat-COLT responded quickly on request to assist firefighters in controlling this mountain side Forest Fire. Not only arriving to provide satellite coverage, but driving additional FirstNet capable phones from Massachusetts to Crawford Notch to assist firefighters in this life-safety mission.



Moving on from the FirstNet Summit and New Hampshire's commitment to FirstNet and AT&T, it is not the only platform that sets New Hampshire apart from the rest of the country. New Hampshire as the "Most Connected State in the Country" through its Mutualink connectivity was acknowledged by the National Capital Region for its ability to connect across all disciplines through voice, text, and video, no matter the device, manufacturer, radio frequency, or cell provider. As the SWIC, it was my honor in April to be asked to present at the US Capitol Police Headquarters in Washington, DC regarding New Hampshire's experience with Mutualink. Because of the events of January 6th, the national Capital Region is defining better ways to communicate across an area that experiences a significant multitude of law enforcement agencies having police powers in metropolitan Washington, DC. Mutualink from their viewpoint provides for them that capacity and they wanted to learn from the only state in the country that has provided a statewide Mutualink platform. It was an honor to be received and present at the US Capitol Police Headquarters, but more so to represent New Hampshire and illustrate the leadership we provide for the nation.

In support of all of what we do as a state and Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee, the US Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure & Security Agency (CISA) has and continues to be a great partner to New Hampshire in offering Technical Assistance (TA) Programs to advance proficiency in what we do as it relates to improved and enhanced communications. New Hampshire applied for and received all four opportunities in 2022 to advance our communication capabilities:

- Drive Testing – Belknap & Carroll Counties – August 15th-19th, 2022
- Statewide Communications Implementation Plan (SCIP) update – September 20th, 2022
- NH Interoperability Field Operations Guide (Electronic App. E-FOG) – October 5th, 2022
- Comm's focused TTX – November 9th, 2022 at the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

The SIEC meeting schedule for the remainder of 2022 will meet on August 19th, 2022 and November 4th, 2022. The SIEC Working Groups meet regularly each month, as well as meetings with the AT&T RAN Engineers quarterly. Attendance is encouraged by all members of the SIEC to be proactive and engaged. It is through these efforts that all gets accomplished

as witnessed by the aforementioned accomplishments just in the past few months.

The world can be a dangerous place, as we've seen most recently, as we all take whatever actions necessary to provide a safer and more secure New Hampshire for our first responders and certainly our family, friends, and the public who live and visit our beautiful state. We cannot insulate our loved ones from the tragedies we witness almost on a daily basis, but we can provide support and commitment to do our best in providing the safest of environments possible. Public Safety and all its disciplines act to preserve the decency of this country as we trust in the generosity and goodwill of our citizens and this nation. It is through these efforts that New Hampshire and this country will prevail. To all, we wish you a safe and relaxing summer (it goes by far too quickly) in hopes that good weather prevails, and you take/make the time to enjoy and appreciate your family and friends and all the wonders New Hampshire has to offer.

Best,

John T. Stevens, SWIC
New Hampshire Department of Safety

FirstNet leadership gives update on New Hampshire public safety communications network

DURHAM, N.H. —

A decades-long project to expand broadband access and create a reliable communications channel for first responders during a mass emergency is making progress.

Construction of FirstNet started about 5 years ago in New Hampshire.

So far, 180 New Hampshire cities and towns have been added to First-Net coverage.

“And we've put 63 cell towers up that no carrier would build to before because they were in rural areas, mountainous areas,” said Jason Porter, AT&T president of public sector.

While congratulating FirstNet's efforts, Gov. Chris Sununu noted that you can now take a cell phone call all the way along Route 9 into Keene — something that was not possible just a few years ago.



WMUR video/article: <https://www.wmur.com/article/irstnet-up-date-new-hampshire-communications-network-5322/39899442>

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